American Women Missionaries and Pioneers Collection

Part 1: Missionaries

The Idabelle Main Papers, 1895-1978

Series I

Correspondence

Folder Description:

Correspondence,
November 1930 – March 1931

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TELEPHONE 68733

CABLE ADDRESS: CHICONCOM SHANGHAI

THE CHINA CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION
中華基督教育會
THE MISSIONS BUILDING
23 YUEN MING YUEN ROAD
SHANGHAI

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CHESTER S. MIAO, ACTING GENERAL SECRETARY
E. H. CRESSY, SECRETARY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
MISS MABEL R. NOWLIN, ASSOCIATE SECRETARY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
MISS MARGARET FRAME, ACTING EDITOR

CO-OPERATING SECRETARIES
FRANK D. GAMEWELL
E. C. LOBENSTINE
E. W. WALLACE

Nov. 20 - 1930.

Dear Mother:

Just a note before we close - Am sending this "carbon" that may interest you - It is so very full of paradoxes -

The week has been delightful: Dr. J. H. P. Sailer, Miss Budd who works with W.D., and many others who uplift. Am working on Review articles, and hope to "put across" a movement in Christian primary education -

We are anxious over the future

of the govt. ed. attitude "They say" a worse anti-Christian than the present one is to be put in. But by working, fasting & prayer, we may meet the days.

This cable came from Clara today - B.W. Al - So it must be a boy. all is well! Am so happy if this is true -

Am so thankful that you are going South. It is best to avoid trouble - and you are so much better in a warm climate. May this be a happy winter for you -

With much love.

Ida.

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11/25/30

Dear Mother:

Just a note enclosing two momentous letters - Will you please keep them for me? But I know that you will want to know about this, and I want you to know!

The world goes on regularly - Your report of the wonderful radio speeches shows how rapidly we are making progress. It seems impossible

that martyrdom is still the best
people on earth, anywhere!
Am going to Nanking Monday
to start a movement in primary
education. Here's hoping it
goes!

With deepest love -

Ida Belle -

Morningside College
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
SIOUX CITY, IOWA

October 10th, 1930

Dr. Ida Belle Lewis, President
Hwa Nan College
Foochow, China

Dear Dr. Lewis:

I wish to report to you that the cost of putting out your father's biography is entirely met and that we have a number of books not yet sold. These will be sold at the regular price. However, if you desire to distribute some of these among friends in China, we will be pleased to furnish you what you will need for that purpose. Or, if there are friends in the United States to whom you care to send them, we will mail them without expense to you.

Permit me to take up with you a matter which has been in the thinking of a number of your friends and a number of the friends of Morningside College during these recent years. Would you be willing to consider the position of Dean of Women of Morningside College?

Immediately when I suggest this to you there comes to my mind all the arguments against it, namely your preparation for work in China, your close contact with the peoples of China, your appreciation of them and the great opportunity for service which is open to you there. On the other hand there comes to my mind at the same time the thought that the same preparation that makes you so well fitted for that work and life makes you equally well fitted for the Deanship of Women in Morningside College. The ripeness of your scholarship, the world vision which has come to you through travel and association with other peoples, the study of the educational field and your human sympathy with all mankind, together with your other qualifications, makes you eminently fitted to lead the young women of the institution and to make the fact of your influence felt to the utmost parts of the earth.

Your Alma Mater has watched the progress of your advancement with a very great degree of pleasure. Your coming to such a position at this time in your career would be an occasion of more than unusual importance. In fact, your coming would be an event in the life of the institution.

There is nothing official about my suggestion. It is a matter for discussion. I should rather this were considered as only a confidential discussion.

Morningside College must merge into a much larger program in the immediate future. Your coming would be a part of that general advance.

I have prayerfully and thoughtfully discussed this in my own thinking and with some of my closest advisers. It meets with the approval of all and, in fact, it meets with the heartiest cooperation of all.

May you not have a field of service here open to you which will be more world-wide in its scope than any you have yet occupied?

Most sincerely

Frank E. Maxman

FEM:AH

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Dec. 12-1930.

Dear Mother:

My trip to Nanking and Chinkiang were delightful - As I came home, I met a Mr. Lin on the train who knew Father - and we had a splendid conversation. It is a great heritage. My Nanking experiences I hope to write up by carbon copy - Perhaps in this letter, perhaps in the nept.

I spent Friday - Monday in the hospital with an infected foot. The red was galloping up my foot and I dared not play with it - Then, I sprained my other ankle. So this week has been full of the experience

of knowing what it would mean to limp through life. However, I shall be quite well soon.

Our new minister of education is a thorough representative of the French school, put in by the active anti-Christians. He has no training in education per se. So we may be in for a bad time. However, the Lord will see us through.

We were deeply interested in Stanley High's article on Pres. Chiang's conversion. All here believe that he is sincere, and already a change in attitude among both Christians and neutrals is noticable. Hope and courage begins to stir!

My deepest love to you, always.

Ida.

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Dec. 23, 1920.

Dear Mother:

Your letter, with the enclosed $25- check came on the last home mail. Thank you for it, greatly. This time I cashed it, as exchange was almost 4-1. It brought $95- Mex. Am expecting to put into my Sioux City account $25- gold in April. The financial pressure is heavier than I have ever known it. And, as you know, my outside expenses have been heavy: hospital

in September, eyes in November and now, my infected foot in December - I was at the hospital four days, and it was at least #32 - maybe more! However, Had I not gone at once, it might have been 4 weeks or even 4 months. They put my feet into ice-water and hot water for 15-min. every 2 hours. I had sprained one foot and the other was infected, spreading at the rate of an inch an hour! However, am very well now - feeling splendid -

Miss Main was taken ill last Tuesday, with what seemed like

the war-time "flu". She sank rapidly into pneumonia and passed away Friday morning. She was buried yesterday. It has been a terrible blow for Mr. Main - and a heavy strain on us all. However, Mr. Main is sustained by the Great Comforter and is at the office today. Mr. Mrs Bankardt come in Friday or Sat. and will be with him until the way to Yenping opens.

We are planning a lovely Christmas. At the house there will be 8 W.F.M.S. people and the girls have invited 2 Marines and 2 young men from the (National City) International Bank. for breakfast. Then, for dinner there

will be the 8 of us - or maybe, 12 if the Foochow boat gets in on schedule -

We have Christmas party today for the staff at the office and several children are in. Boxes from America have brought dolls for the girls and balls & crayons for the boys. It is great fun - It is interesting to see how full of "Christmas" the Chinese shops are. There is little of the underlying meaning, but it seems to be a festival of children's toys - Most of them are from Japan and Europe -

By the time this reaches you, it will be January 23. Nevertheless we wish you all a happy new year -

With deepest love -

Ida.

November 28, 1930.

President F.E. Mossman,
Morningside College,
Sioux City, Iowa.

My dear President Mossman,

Your letter of October 10 came to me from Foochow about ten days ago. Since that time, I have had it constantly in my thinking and in my prayer.

For three years I have seen the change of the situation in China, that makes it impossible for me to feel the task of missions as I used to feel it. Since 1927, with the rise of Chinese Christian leaders, and their splendid response to responsibility, I have seen that the future is absolutely in the hands of the Chinese leaders. The missionary will have constantly less to do. For a while I thought that there might be a call for missionaries to pioneer into the interior, for there is much untouched territory. But I find that the Chinese wish to remove from Christianity the insignia of "Foreign religion", and sothey wish to do the pioneering themselves. The present social condition makes it almost impossible for foreigners to be interior anyway, but, of course, this may pass. However, in three years, the Chinese have made progress that I would have prophesied would take three decades, in the matter of indigenous leadership of the Christian church. Of course, this is what missions have been praying for and working toward, since the first Chinese Christian was sent to school. It is an end devoutly to be hoped for.

I saw last year, that in our colleges, wherever a Chinese young woman could take hold of a college department instead of a missionary, the young woman should be chosen. The schools are growing, but not so rapidly as to call for missionaries to give life, as we called for it a decade ago. Most of the institutions are calling for three year contract-missionaries.

All of these things are true, and the way evidently leads to fewer missionaries instead of toward a call for more. I faced last year the possiblilty of going home, and did not know what I could do at home. However, as soon as the probability of my departure from Hwa Nan was known, this place

in Shanghai opened up. Then Yenching called. And I found, to my amazement, that if I were willing to go anywhere and do anything - that is, if I did not hold to my desire for administrative duties, nor college work, there would be many place for me to serve here in China. It seemed to me that God had just this lesson for me to learn. And from many angles, it looked as though to leave China now, would be leaving just because the way was hard. So I decided to stay as long as any missionary stays, or until I can stay no longer, anywhere in China.

Then, this fall, without warning, your offer came. It was the place of all others in the world that I should love to be, if I could not be in China. The close touch with my father, and with our family, the beautiful fellowship that I have had with the faculty and with the entire student group every furlough, makes an appeal that is very strong. The opportunity for Christian service untrammeled by the restrictions that are hedging us about. There would be none of the uncertainty that comes to us here. I know that the task would be too great for me, and that adjustment to America might be difficult, but that would not prevent me from coming if there were no other reasons. I can think of no greater place for a life to be spent than in Morningside College. Perhaps the oppertunity there today is greater than the opportunity here.

But, after long prayer, consultation with a few friends here, and after consideration of the questions from all points of view, with the full knowledge that the time may come sometime when there will be no place in China for a foreigner, even with all of these things, I cannot gonow. I have a deep-seated conviction that God wants me in China. And until release from that call comes, I dare not leave.

You will understand. It may be a mystic experience, but it is more real than any material experience in life. I realize what this means, for the appeal a Morningside is strong, and the changes out here are very rapid. But I must stay by out here as long as missionaries are needed anywhere, or until the church calls us all home. Of course it may be that the trend of things will change. But I do not think so. China is on the march upward, thank God, and will continue to go forward, ever seeking more leadership from her own people, as is her inherent right. And whether missionaries stay or go, Christianity is here to stay, for the Chinese Christians have proved their ability to stand in hard places, and to lead in spite of difficulties. But my lot was cast with China twenty years ago, and I must stay as long as I am needed, anywhere.

In writing this letter, I feel somewhat as the pilgrims must have felt when they watched the Mayflower pull out for home and leave them to an unknown future. But as they felt, I feel that this is the place where God is calling me, and I must trust Him for the future, and obey, utterly.

We have greatly enjoyed Merab. She is making a profound impression upon all who know her out here, and I know that she is enjoying her work. She seems very well. I shall see her next week as I go to Nanking Monday, again.

It is a joy to know that the biography has paid for itself. Our family deeply appreciates the help you gave in making its publication possible. We thank you for this, and for all the other kindnesses you have given us.

With deep personal regard,

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Jan. 5, 1931.

Dr. Sutherland of 160 5th Ave., Mother of Mrs. Kennedy is visiting China -)de sends his regards to you.

Dear Mother -

Happy New Year! We have left 1930 behind and are starting in anew. And yet we build on the old. My work is opening up. In addition to the Review, I am starting a survey of Primary Education of China in connection with the Layman's Inquiry that has come to China. It will be a fascinating, profitable task and I will know more when through with it than I have ever known about Chinese education. Am to visit Nanking, Canton (where I have never

gone) Peking and Hankow before June,
Am so glad for this vision ahead.
Mrs. Avann just came in from
Korea, and have had to review
the Hwa Nan situation again.
I shall be glad when it will
be all good. This is almost the
last.

Dr. Leighton Stuart was just
in from Peking. He is a general-
Yours was the only letter from home
this morning - Am so glad for
your pleasant trip South and
thank the Good Father that you will
miss the cold. With much love to you
and to Aunt Olive - Ida.

Jan 18th, Our first anniversary.

[1931]

Dearest Dad:

Your letter written the day after Christmas has just come. It was a great satisfaction to know how bravely you are bearing your sorrow. The blow fell with such tragic swiftness. It seems next to impossible that mother could have been taken that suddenly. But I'm so glad that she didn't suffer. One of my great regrets is that I hadn't been able as yet to give her those beautiful things

compulsion to do something worth while for others.

I'm so glad to know that the Bankhardts are to be with you for a while, for I'm sure they will be a great comfort. Mr. and Mrs. Wilke drove over last Sunday to see us, and learn whether we had any further word from you. Mrs. Wilke said that she had come to love my mother so much even in the little time she had known her.

she deserved, after all that she has sacrificed for us children. I'm so glad that there is to be the memorial to mother at the Community Church. Even when I was out there six years ago she was working hard for it. Mother was a woman in a million, with all her strength of mind and character, and kind heart. Her life was a constant inspiration and now that she has passed on, I feel all the greater

Connie has just finished nursing baby, and he is now being put back in the sunshine. Everyday that it's too cold or cloudy Connie puts baby outdoors in the sunshine. He weighs over thirteen pounds. He talks a little to himself now.

I wonder if you received my cable, which I sent immediately when yours arrived. I also sent a check for five-hundred dollars in partial payment of the amount I owe you. Hope it's arrived safely. We sent a little Christmas package, but as it was not insured it may never have reached you.

With best love from your children, Orin.

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Feb. 17-1931.

Exchange is so
$5 Mex to $1 gold!
Our salaries are
$2 - $1 so we are
knowing the pinch
of living along
with the U.S.A.!

Dear Mother -

Have been laid low for some two weeks with "flu" - I went to Nanking with the "Fact Finders", all set for some constructive work for our Christian Primary Schools, and worked one day. The second I woke with a fever of 102° - So for several days I was ill and for several days I convalesced in the hospital. These hospitals are a great joy but they do eat money! However, I am trying to be sensible and patient,

thankful that it was not typhoid!
Am just back to Shanghai. We had
a good trip yesterday, Emory Luccock
and I. He is pastor of Community Church
a cousin of Halford Luccock and a
friend of James. It was stimulating
to talk to him. Today is Chinese New Year.
In Nanking the govt has forbidden
any celebration of the old Chinese New
Year and police have visited homes
and shops, confiscating kitchen gods
or any sign of gaety. Not a firecracker
was heard until we were almost to
Shanghai. Here, however, we all have
2 days' holiday and the servants are
celebrating. Last night there were
firecrackers all around all night. Of
course this is the French concession! It
is snowing - the ground is covered about 6 inches,
but it is not cold. My love to you always,
Ida.

1564 Ave. Joffre
Shanghai
March 9, 1931.

Dear Mother -

Your good letter telling of the races at Florida came. It does interest me the way you are alive to new things! Spanish, radio, and now auto-races! I wonder what will be next!

Ireached home this morning from Canton, Swatow and Amoy. The Good Father gave strength for the days, and I learned much about the primary school situation. Almost without exception, the men's schools are turned over to the Chinese churches, and the schools are managed on the income of tuitions. They charge $8 - $10 per semester and have, usually 50 - 100 pupils - I don't know what my judgement would be regarding them - But it would make no difference what my judgement is

Because the Chinese Christians will carry them on that way!

Dr. Mrs. Diffendorfer were just through here - They are "at their wits' ends over the situation in missions" - Sometimes I wonder if the whole is not good for us - and let us like the early missionaries - work our way - and the Chinese Christian church will stand -

It was a joy see 5 of our Hwa Nan College graduates on my trip - no. 4 - 1 in Canton and 3 in Amoy. I saw their schools and felt the thrill when they stood before their classes. I was introduced as the "grandmother"; and said when these girls taught, I would be a "great - grandmother"! So you see, hoary age advances fast -

It is good to be at home again and I look forward with great anticipation to my spring's work - It will be good to know the Primary situation -

With much love -

Ida.

Shanghai
March 16. 1981.

Dear Mother:

This week Dr. Mrs. Freeman are here again. They are older, but are still vigorous, and Mrs. Freeman is as remarkable as ever. They are with Mansfield who is one of the leading Christian laymen of Shanghai, a member of Community Church, which Dr. Freeman founded. Mansfield is in life insurance - which greatly appeals to the intelligent Chinese who have a good deal of money but who are fearful of investments in China today-

Bishop and Mrs. McConnell are expected this week, to be here Tuesday to Thursday. Dr. Mrs. Diffendorfer were in last week, and Bishop Gowdy is here - People are very blue over the possibility of a further cut and the probable downward slide of the W.F.M.S. funds. However, many feel that the pinch of poverty is a good thing in many ways. Chinese churches are more and more getting under the load and the

Chinese Christian leaders are taking much responsibility.

Miss Laura White is in the Sanitarium with spine. She is giving up her work for some months, hoping to be well enough to carry on later - Her Chinese daughter - Li Kwang Tang - is nobly carrying on the Woman's magazine that is used all over China, and is read by many thousands of Christian women and school girls every month. So must the work be passed on!

Daffodils and crocus are coming up and blossoming all over the lawn. They are very lovely. The Methodist compound here has been sold, and the W.F.M.S. is going to build a home in Shanghai, the only new building ratified in China. We are going to plant pecan trees and other nice things in our new compound - It may be that we shall never see the nuts - but then, again, we may! And the world must be made richer by faith!

We are hoping that China can get through this spring without war. If so, it will be a great step forward -

With much love - Ida.